

C O N C O R D I A U N I V E R S I T Y

SENATE RESEARCH COMMITTEE

M I N U T E S

(of SRC meeting held on Thursday, December 12, 1991
at 10:00 A.M., In Room H-769, SGW campus)

ATTENDANCE -

Members present: V. Baba, P. Bird, U. De Bréntani,
 D. Ginter, J.N. Lightstone (Chair), D.
 Markiewicz, R.J. Parker, S. Sankar, P.
 Shizgal, A. Williams, Carole Zucker,
 Evelyn Loo (Secretary)

Guests: Dr. P. Kenniff, Dr. M. Cohen, Dr. M.
 Kusy, Dr. C. Ross, Dr. M.N.S. Swamy

Absent with regrets: Dr. R. Sheinin

Absent: C. Bertrand, E. Doedel, M. Haque, T.S.
 Sankar, A. Zaldi

Dr. Jack N. Lightstone occupied the Chair.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:06 a.m.

The Chair welcomed all those who were present and noted that on May 24, 1991, Senate adopted a motion requesting the SRC to consider further matters bearing upon the implementation of policy document entitled, "The Enhancement of Research at Concordia University" and to make recommendations to Senate that the SRC deemed appropriate. The SRC Committee has been discussing the issues over the fall semester and decided that it would be of benefit at this point in its deliberations to widen the range of participants in the discussions, while these discussions are still taking place within the confines of the SRC. As a result the University's senior administrators were invited to the current meeting.

Dr. Ginter, at the request of the Chair, highlighted the main features of the document's approach.

The Chair added that the document tries to recommend a process which is highly consensual, which fully integrates various related activities such as strategic academic planning, budgeting and appraisal at all levels, and which delineates a clear division of labour among responsible bodies and individuals.

Dr. Cohen, after thanking the SRC Committee for producing the document, stated that the document presented a very classical model for planning. That the production of a five-year rolling budget would be difficult in the sense that we cannot accurately predict our financial revenues 3 to 5 years in the future. He stated, however, that this did not constitute sufficient reason for not attempting to implement the recommended process.

Dr. Kenniff expressed support for the ideas and objectives of the document. He also acknowledged that this cannot necessarily be fully implemented tomorrow. At the outset it may be possible to strive for 3-year rolling plans and budgets.

Chair remarked that the priorities and strategies that have been, or will shortly be, approved by the university whether for research or for teaching can and should to be taken into account as soon as possible by departments in their own thinking about where they want to be two, three, four years hence. The problem lies with helping people in the academic unit to think seriously and in a systematic way about how to get from where they are now to where they want to be. In addition, the University requires appropriate integrative and consensual processes which permit units and Faculties to plan in light of the approved priorities and strategies and to have some indication regarding when and how their plans will be acted upon.

Dr. Kenniff suggested to the committee that this kind of brain storming session might be extended to the Chairs of Academic units, and if it were decided to do so, that such sessions would be more beneficial were some members of the SRC to function as animators.

Dr. Cohen added that not only Chairs' meetings but the University Budget Committee would be an appropriate forum for such discussion.

Dr. Sankar recounted how his own experience in trying to develop CONCAVE demonstrates the need for the type of planning called for in the document.

Dr. Cohen remarked that an important factor in institutional development, whether in research or in other areas, is to have an institution's members all moving in the same general, although not necessarily specific, direction.

Dr. Parker remarked that the consensual approach called for in the document should be elevated to a first principle and should perhaps be highlighted.

Dr. Baba noted that the document under discussion is based on a number of general, but important, premises:

1. planning is useful;
2. realistic goals can be set by using successful existing mechanisms;
3. constraints can be reasonably predicted in the short-term and immediate-term;
4. planning has to take place at all levels;
5. planning at each level should take place with optimal detail;
6. planning at all levels needs to mesh.

The Chair remarked that in the discussion he heard no major challenges to, or disagreement with, the approach and recommendations set forth in the document. He asked whether he is correct in taking this fact as support for the document's recommendations.

No one challenged the Chair's conclusion in this regard.

Chair thanked members present and informed them that he will take into considerations their suggestions.

The next meeting has not been scheduled yet but Committee members will be advised in the near future.

The Meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.